

TREATISE ON MERCURY

BELLOSTE

1843



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# Treatise on Mercury,

EXHIBITING ITS

**WONDERFUL POWERS**

WHEN TAKEN

**IN A CRUDE STATE:**

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF THE AUTHOR

**AUGUSTIN BELLOSTE,**

*By an English Medical Gentleman.*

WITH OBSERVATIONS IN A PREFACE,

**By R. CARLILE.**

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*THIRD EDITION.*  
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1843.





## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.



Having published this Treatise on Mercury in Nos. 22 and 23, Vol. 9, of "The Republican," the interest excited by it, and the good done in several instances by the use of the medicine, have created a sort of universal demand for the treatise. The Nos. of "The Republican" speedily ran out of print, a second edition has shared the same fate, whilst the anxiety to obtain the treatise is so great, and the subject so important, that it seems like an act of criminality towards the community, longer to withhold a third edition.

That edition is now presented, and the reports which the Publisher has received from all parts of the country encourage him to warrant the correctness of the experience and judgment of the author of the Treatise.

From Fartown, in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, Alexander Wilson reports the cure of an internal abscess. He wrote to the Publisher for advice, immediately on the publication of the Letter to Mrs. Fry, in No. 16, Vol. 8, of "The Republican." He used about a quarter of pound of the Crude Mercury, and found himself cured; and laments that his father had not known the remedy, who was cut off about two years before, by a similar disease, after a failure in application to every medical man of note in that neighbourhood. Mr. Wilson has since used a full pound to remove other complaints, and is so far enthusiastic as to look upon it as a sort of panacea. It may be worthy of observation, that he took the Mercury simply on the recommendation of the Publisher, and before he had seen the Treatise.

From Birmingham, there are two cases reported though the names have not been yet received. One case of deafness, which the patient felt removed by a cracking of the viscous matter in the ears, about two hours after swallowing some Mercury. The other a case of bad legs, of forty-five years standing. The patient is represented as having been a cripple, a bachelor, and one who had passed a miserable life to sixty years of age. The use of

the Mercury enabled him to throw away his bandages, his flannels, and all superfluities; gave soundness to his legs; and filled the old gentleman with notions of marriage! in which, if he does not take care and make a prudent choice, he may find a worse disease than a pair of bad legs. This case is not altogether unlike that of the Old Turkish Courtier, who fancied such great benefit from the pills of an English physician, as to contemplate the necessity of increasing the number of his wives to the full amount sanctioned by the Prophet.

From Bristol, there is the testimony of a medical man, that he has seen many singular cures performed by the Crude Mercury. Other medical men have borne similar testimony; but it must be confessed, that the majority scout its use; though they cannot give a solid reason for it.

From Exeter a long paper has been received, detailing its powers on a child of five years old, that was kept in a constant state of fever by worms, perhaps combined with other ailments, and that the child is now restored to a state of regular health, after discharging several worms. The mother of the same child swallowed half an ounce of Mercury, whilst under a violent nausea, which had been brought on by the maternal act of assisting another female in a distressing case of abortion, and it instantly put a stop to the sickness, though a momentary fever was the consequence of the reaction of the Mercury; still all went off well through the natural course. These persons are so much delighted with the powers of Mercury, as to resolve to use it in all cases.

The case of James Herd, of Aberdeen, communicated by himself, who was cured of dreadful ulcers of twenty-five years standing, is the best answer to medical men who proclaim its inefficacy in any case. This case may be found in No. 3, Vol. 11 of "The Republican." Other equally interesting cases may be found in "The Republican," too numerous to be copied in this preface. The only hitherto unpublished cases are, the cure of the gout in a bookseller of the neighbourhood of Sunderland, and of a liver complaint in a Lady who had been a great sufferer and found no relief by other medical assistance.

The Publisher confesses, that the reports he has received of the powers of Mercury, in its crude state, are more



general than particular; but he feels confident, that they go the full length of warranting all that the author of the treatise has said upon the subject. There is a shyness, particular with females, in publishing the state of their bodies when under diseases; and some of them will rather suffer constant pain and premature death, than make what they dread as such, an exposure of their bodily imperfections. But this is the shyness of ignorance only:—an intelligent woman would feel that neither her chastity nor her modesty was affected by making known the diseases or imperfections of her body, where the object is to seek a cure, or to report a cure for the benefit of others.

The Publisher, as an individual, has such confidence in the virtues of the Crude Mercury, that he continues to take, occasionally, a small quantity of it. He has consumed half a pound of it altogether, and feels a solid benefit, in having lost every symptom of sciatica or rheumatism, by which he has long suffered much acute pain. After having been obliged to incase himself in flannel for four years, without any omission in the summer, he has now thrown off every vestige of it, and goes, in the winter, as lightly clad as a boy. He has once exposed himself to a soaking rain, and often to currents of air, which he could not previously bear without pain, experimentally, to see if the rheumatism would again attack him whilst using the Mercury; but he has not felt the slightest return of it. He is of opinion, that it is a perfect specific in all incipient states of gout and rheumatism.

There is a vulgar error connected with this medicine, that it passes so rapidly through the body, as not to take time to do any good, even if it had the virtue. But this is not the case. From his own experience and that of others, the Publisher can say, that it will pass through the body as regular and as slow as any kind of food, sometimes taking about forty-eight hours before it be thrown off and then in a completely disturbed state. There may be exceptions, as in a disordered state of the bowels; but such is the general rule of its motion in the body.

Others object, that it has no chemical powers, but acts wholly mechanically, by the force of its superior gravity. It is enough, if a healthy circulation of the fluids be restored by this means; but the Publisher is of opinion, that



it has a chemical as well as a mechanical force, in the body, by its certain capacity to destroy worms, and cure all internal as well as external wounds.

He is also informed, that Mr. Abernethy, the Surgeon, of London, resorts to the Crude Mercury Pill, in all such cases. He has this information from two sources—one a medical man; the other a patient of Mr. Abernethy's, for a wound in the leg; and who, by the aid of his microscope, could distinguish the globules of Mercury in the pills. This patient received a perfect cure from those pills.

There is nothing more probable, than that all the internal disorders of the human body have some common cause; though the effects are exhibited under a variety of characters. If such be the case, and if Mercury be the restorative, in opposition to that common cause of disorder, it approaches as near to a panacea as any thing can approach. Such is the general reasoning of Belloste.

The human body, as well as that of every other animal and vegetable, is a system of a circulation of fluids—*that and nothing else*. Health, is a state of possessing these fluids of a peculiar quality, and in a due state of motion. A bad state of quality in the fluids generates undue state of motion; which may be explained to the most ignorant reader, by what the Doctor calls pulse-feeling. Pulsation is the rushing of the blood through one of the valves of the blood vessels, and each pulsatory motion is an opening, a forced opening of the valve, to let the blood run through. A quick pulse indicates fever, undue heat, and a too rapid motion of the blood: a slow pulse is indicative of weakness, and a want of energy in the fluids to keep up a proper motion. A cessation of pulsation, or the circulation of the fluids, is death.

The property of Crude Mercury is to mingle with these fluids throughout the body, and to remove whatever forms an impediment to their proper and most extensive motion, without having any power to injure such part of the fluids as may be in a healthy state. It changes the quality of nothing wholesome, but removes that which is unwholesome. Put it in water, or in milk, you find that it has not the least chemical action upon these fluids, nor the fluids upon it: such is its state with the chyle, the blood, and the nervous fluids of the body, which are of a quality ap-



proaching to a limpid and tasteless balsam when in a state of health. Acidity and acrimony are symptoms of disease. As to the quantity proper to be used, the patients had better experiment upon themselves, beginning with a small quantity daily, and increasing it, if they find an increase beneficial. No quantity will injure them; but a very small quantity may be inefficacious. The Publisher has swallowed a quantity at a time, daily, about the size of an ordinary or large pill.

In cases, where the stomach has been in a high state of acidity, slight salivation has been produced; but this is so rare, as to amount to an exception to the general rule.

It only remains to be stated, for the information of those unacquainted with the fact, that Crude Mercury is the Quicksilver in common sale, and common use. There is a general notion in the West of England, that it has the chemical power to cure the itch atmospherically, and the means used, are simply to wear a girdle that contains it, round the waist.

For himself, as an apology for meddling with such a matter, the Publisher can freely say, that he has no private motive, no motive of profit, as an inducement, any further, than the benefit felt by the use of Crude Mercury may make him friends and well wishers. In such a matter, he would do good to his enemies; and hope thereby to make them friends; but he prides himself in having fairly laid this matter before the public, in a popular way, instead of adopting any principle of empiricism for profit. He has not only avoided this himself, but has discountenanced it in others.

The following mode of preparing Belloste's famous pill are taken from a supplement to the latest published Pharmacopoeia of this country, edited by S. F. Gray, and published by Underwoods, Fleet Street.

1. Take Quicksilver 1lb, Sugar 4oz, Scammony and jalap root in powder, each 1lb., white wine sufficient:\* some use cream of tartar instead of sugar.

2. Take Quicksilver 12oz., common turpentine sufficient, rhubarb 2oz. and 2 drams, pulp of colocynth 4oz., to be made into pills for a de-obstruent, alterative dose. Recom-

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\* This word *sufficient*, means the quantity sufficient to make a paste of the powders, &c. for pills. The Quicksilver requires much friction to mix well with the other ingredients.



mended to be taken twice or thrice a day, a pill or two at a time, in syphilis, and most little known complaints.

The Publisher makes excellent pills for all general complaints of the stomach, of equal quantities as to weight, of quicksilver, jalap in powder, rhubarb or hiera picra, or both rubbed up in a solid paste with the balsam of Copaiba or Peru, and floured *secundum artem* with magnesia. Use these pills occasionally, and you will have little need of the assistance of a medical man.

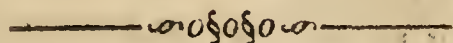
A volume upon the subject of Crude Mercury was written and published by a Doctor Dovor, who practised most extensively and most respectably in Bristol and London, as a physician, from the year 1720 to 1760. He refers to the treatise of Belloste; but does not acknowledge him to be his authority, though he validates all the virtues which the latter ascribed to Crude Mercury. This volume is altogether in English, and has a long list of extraordinary cases as cures, duly attested by persons of all ranks. I learn by this volume, what I hinted from suspicion; that the Medical Craft look upon Quicksilver or Crude Mercury, as the Priests look upon Infidelity—calculated to spoil their profits. Crude Mercury seems applicable as a medicine for vegetables, as is evinced in the following copy from a periodical work:

BLIGHT IN FRUIT TREES.—Whenever you see a branch of a tree either blighted or eaten away by insects, take a shoe-maker's awl and pierce the lower part of the branch into the wood, then pour in a drop or two of Quicksilver, and stop the whole with a small piece of wood. In a day or two all the insects, not only upon that branch, but upon the rest of the branches, will fall and die, and the blights will cease.—*Glasgow Mechanic's Magazine*.

Pray, Gentlemen of the Medical profession, be so good to tell us how Crude Mercury acts upon the vegetable, in the default of all chemical powers? If the above prescription be a good one, it corroborates the whole of Belloste's argument; for the vegetable has a circulation of fluids upon the same principle as that of the animal, is alike subject to states of health, disease, &c.: and the Publisher has no doubt but time and improvement will produce a vegetable medical science, and that our doctors in divinity will be converted into doctors in vegetation. Divinity is a vice, but vegetation may be termed the life and health of mankind.



# OF MERCURY.



I may be excused the ceremony of a Preface to the following work, since my reader will perceive it to be the result of a long practice and experience, and a sedulous application.

Mercury, whose virtues I here publish, is a miracle of Nature, and the greatest gift in the whole *Materia medica*.\*

Chance has let me into a greater knowledge of it, than all I could collect from those who have used it or written of it.

I am ready to acknowledge, that it was not in consequence of any reasoning that I first entered upon the use of it; however the success I met with from its administration, emboldened me to stick to it, and to add authority to one experience, by another; my future employs gave me frequent and favourable opportunities of trying its efficacy in many chronical and inveterate cases, which were esteemed incurable, yet they entirely gave way to crude mercury. I have found out a method to prevent it from subliming, though without such restraint, I cannot be of opinion that the heat of our bodies is sufficient to sublime it. I have mixed it with gentle purgatives, which determine one part of its action by stool; another part of it communicates itself to the blood, mixes with the lymph in circulation, without losing its globular figure, and never leaves it till it has rendered it capable of penetrating everywhere by its subtilty and fluidity, and of nourishing all parts by means of its balsamic particles, which it re-instates in their natural condition, when they are depraved and altered, and removes all obstacles that may impede its progress. It is a professed enemy to every thing heterogenous, vitiating, or malignant. As I became acquainted with its virtues through a long and constant use of it, I have not been very anxious about consulting the authors who had written of it, having perused but a few of them: I know that some extol it, as Mr. Lemery, and others.

Avicen says that some people drink it without any ill consequence, and orders it for children in scald heads. Planiscampus attributes more excellent qualities to Mercury than to Guaiacum. Marianus Sanctus directs four pounds of it to be taken in the iliac passion. Antonius Musa, and Mesue, recommend it for worms and the itch. Mr. le Duc, a physician, who made a voyage to the Levant, tells us, that the women of Smyrna frequently swallow two drams of it at a time to make them conceive: he laughs at those who think it a poison; for says he, the workers in Quicksilver mines have gotten a trick of swallowing some pounds of it just as they are leaving off work; which as soon as they get home, they discharge and sell.

\* This plainly translated, signifies *medicaments*, or a practical knowledge of all medicines in use.—Editor.



To prevent which roguery, it is usual to shut them up for some hours after they have done work, until they are constrained to let go what they have swallowed.

Some look upon it to be hot, and others cold; however, if it softens the blood, if it mitigates the most exquisite pains, and appeases the tumult of the spirits in the volvulus, and many other disorders; if it disposes persons to grow fat, as without doubt it does; these considerations put together, make it more probable that it is more cold than hot, at least that is of a temper between both.

Be it hot or cold, its effects are what I have regard to, and not its qualities. Let it be extolled or condemned, its goodness will be still the same. It is matter of fact that no one thing in nature is capable of producing such salutary and surprising effects in almost all disorders; notwithstanding many take upon them to run it down. It is indeed a good medicine, cries one, but then it is dangerous. This is giving it a good and a bad character in a breath, thereby making way for fears and doubts, and depriving a number of afflicted persons of the speedy help they might obtain from its use, till they have languished out their lives under a load of diseases and fruitless remedies.

Experience being the strongest of all proof, I thought it might not be improper to relate some cures performed at different times on different subjects, and in different disorders. Were I to publish all those which I have performed in the space of three and forty years that I have made use of mercury, a very large volume would hardly contain them. In this treatise I have taken the same method as in my former work, where, at the end of the cure of each wound I have annexed an observation by way of reflection, and, in this, I have likewise subjoined a kind of *rationale* to every experience, in order to explain the mechanical idea which I had of this remedy.

In the year 1681, being at Turin a young Abbe informed me, that after an impure commerce, he had been attacked with some venereal complaints, which were not taken care of; that some months after he was afflicted with nocturnal pains in divers parts of his body, together with an ulcer on his nose, which he shewed me. He told me that the posture of his affairs for the season of the year, would not permit him to enter upon a strict course of medicine; and that it was of the highest consequence that his disorder should be kept in privacy; desiring me to contrive him something which might for the present hinder its further progress, and in the spring he said he would go to Paris for the conveniency of pursuing his cure.

I had at that time, but a superficial knowledge of mercury; so I made him up, according to my usual manner, a mass of purging pills, and ordered him to take a single pill every other night going to bed.

He had not taken them above five times, before he told me that his pains were diminished, and his ulcer become much better. And after eleven or twelve doses, he found himself entirely cured, to his own surprise as well as mine, thinking I was all this while administering no more than a palliative remedy.

I advised him however to continue his medicine for some little time



longer, for security sake; and it is very certain that he never afterwards felt the least symptom of the disorder.

If we consider that mercury is the only remedy capable of destroying the venereal virulence, it will not be surprising that it wrought this effect in the present case. But it seems not easily accounted for, how it should act in so salutary a manner, without giving the patient the least inconvenience or conflict; he having never through the whole course of his cure, been interrupted in his sleep, or diet, nor was he confined to his bed or chamber, nor did he alter his usual way of living, so as to give any one the least suspicion that was under a course of physic.

This was the first cure I performed in such a manner, being at that time surgeon-major of the Hospital of Briançon, where I administered the same remedy to many persons with the same success. In the year 1694, Mr. le Mareschal de Catinat sent me several subaltern officers to Oulx, who were attacked with the same maladies. They took no other remedy, and returned to their army in six weeks, fat, brisk, and sound, without farther trouble. I omit a relation of the particulars, for the sake of avoiding an offensive prolixity, and shall only give an instance of a cure of each kind, unless some extraordinary circumstance induces me to the contrary.

In the following year, 1682, Mr. le Comte de S. George, Gentleman of the horse to Her Royal Highness\* and a captain in the Guards, desired me to visit the corporal of his company, who for two years had a schirrhous tumour, at the time as big as one's head, which covered his right thigh, so that he was forced to walk very incommodiously with a pair of crutches. The most noted surgeons in Turin had ordered him many remedies without success. I resolved to try what mercury would do with him; and having continued it in the manner afore-mentioned for eighteen or twenty days, the tumour softened and came to suppuration. I opened it, and there issued seven or eighth pints of pus and lymph, and in a month he was perfectly cured, laid aside his crutches, and walked at liberty.

This second cure gave me a high esteem for the remedy, but my removal to another station soon afterwards, debarred me of frequent opportunities of applying it as I wished. Besides my age had not as yet advanced me to a requisite degree of credit for acting as I thought proper, so that I was forced to wait a more favorable season.

In the year 1687, being surgeon-major of the Hospital of Luserne, I made use of it with success in several hard and schirrhous tumours. I found that those which were of but moderate size, and of no very long duration, would be dissipated without suppurating; and that the large and old one would come to suppuration. This made me of opinion, that notwithstanding their hardness, age, and insensibility, they were not entirely without communication with the fluids.

To give a mechanical explanation of the effect which mercury is able to produce on these tumours, it must be considered that the

\* The Dowager of Savoy, to whom Auguste Belloste was subsequently first surgeon.



matter which forms a schirrhous and other tumours that are owing to congestion, as well as obstructions in all other parts of the body, cannot put itself in motion, when it is once accumulated and stopped : notwithstanding the springiness of the parts, there is an absolute need of something to shock, subtilize, render it fluid and disunite it.

To answer these purposes, the fluids which circulate in tumours, as likewise in all parts of the body, must be put into rapid motion, sufficient to disconcert, loosen, and remove that which before was fixed and motionless. Mercury alone is complete in these indications, as it unites itself with the lymph, follows its motion, and accompanies it through all parts. These little globules, divisible to infinity, roll along with it inseparably : the rotundity of their figure makes them fit to combat the obstacles they meet, without any fear of their being stopped, withheld or entangled : they slide upon, strike, rub, and set in motion the particles of the matters which were united, glued together, connected and coagulated, in the parts or in the glands, contrary to the laws of Nature ; they render them fluid, reduce them to pus, or carry them away with themselves, to eliminate them out of the body by the prespiratory passages, or by stool or urine.

By this mechanism, unnatural tumours, obstructions in ulcers, and other parts of the body, are destroyed, the fluids being re-established in that free course which is necessary to life, and the preservation of health : such is the conception which I have of the two operations of mercury on coagulations ; that of absorbing, and that of dissolving ; though these are philosophical terms, which with regard to operative effects are to be explained in a quite different manner, as I shall endeavour to shew hereafter.

In 1691, being surgeon-major of the Hospital of Briçon, I was brought to see a young woman, who had a tumour on her right cheek for two years. When it came to suppuration it was dressed with a tent, which left a fistula in the part, and by degrees the lower jaw became so fixed, that it had entirely lost its motion, and her mouth was in a manner closed, insomuch that she was constrained to live wholly on broths and other liquids. I was told that she had made use of several remedies without success.

I ordered some very small pills to be made up for her, one of which she took every other day for a month, and the end of which her cheek was loosened, her mouth opened, and her fistula quite cured ; which gave the patient an equal degree of joy and astonishment. This cure, somewhat surprising to me, prevailed on me to administer the remedy in several chronic diseases, which had before eluded the force of all the usual medicines, yet notwithstanding gave way to this.

The greater part of the fistulas, which happen in wounds and abscesses, are the consequence of tents, which by turning down the fibres of the canal, into which they are introduced, and by their frequent friction and continual compression unite them, and make them adhere one to another, until what is usually called a callus be formed.

As there are in all parts of the body, a great number of small vessels, which convey the lymph and the other juices : the orifices of



the little tubes, which are contained within the whole extent of the callus, and which confining and bearing upon the aforementioned replicated and united fibres, the round particles of the mercury, with which the lymph is charged being impelled against these fibres, shock, disunite, and relieve them: the nutritious juice expands itself among the fibres thus relieved, and reinstates them in their original form: I think it is not easy to explain in any other manner, how mercury produces its effect on the callus of a fistula, than by its shocking and disengaging the fibres which were before replicated and glued together in which case it is absolutely necessary that the tent should be thrown aside. They who will have that its virtue consists in sucking up acids, should not urge that consideration where there are no acids to be sucked up; or if they urge that it serves to dissolve the callus, let them give some mechanical account, how that can be; for it is certainly true that it must act here, as in obstructions and tumours, and that it is only in virtue of some mechanical property, that it answers the end in such a number of different cases.

After the peace in 1696, I had the honour to succeed the famous M. Thouvenot, who was, until his death, first surgeon to her Royal Highness; soon after I came to Turin, I saw a poor girl begging on the steps of St. John's Church, in a place called Cornie; the many scrophulous holes in her face and sternum, rendered her an object horrible to look at: besides, her neck was full of swoln glands, and her hands and feet were quite deformed.

I sent for her home, and prevailed upon her to take a dose of my mercury every other day, and being willing to see her take the first dose myself I ordered some soup to be brought her, to swallow after it

She continued the use of this medicine for six months, at the end of which she was entirely cured; so that she was married, had children, became a widow, and is at this time married again, notwithstanding the deformity which her cicatrices carry with them; she is now living and every one in Turin knows her. She was a surety in baptism to the first child it pleased God to bless me withal.

Scrophulous cases are very difficult to cure, and very few remedies affect their cause. They frequently occur in some climates and nations, and are not seldom the inheritance of our ancestor's irregularities; their source is the blood, their seat in the glands and joints.

They are rebellious to remedies through their cold nature, and the tenacity of their humour, which is inspissated by an acid.

It has been long since confessed, that mercury alone is capable of working a thorough cure in these disorders, whether by liquifying, dissolving, and putting in motion the liquors, or by destroying the acids and vicious ferment, which occasion the lymph to coagulate, and by sending spirits and heat into the afflicted members. It is in short, the only known remedy that answers every indication.

The acid which causes these cold coagulations, is exceedingly difficult to be destroyed. The mercury can, in its motion, but little effect



its soft and glutinous texture ; and for this reason a considerable time passes before it is able to disconcert it, and break or blunt the points of the acids which cause it; however, it is past all dispute, that it does it at last; for by circulating with the lymph in the articulations, and in the scrophulous glands, it, by gentle degrees, removes the obstacles which oppose the course of the liquids. These cures are gentle though slow. A salivation would be more expeditious, but then it would be more fatiguing and dangerous.

About a year after, I had under my care M. Dufaure, a Frenchman, married at Turin, and well known all over the city. He had been afflicted with a tumour in the liver, for about two years, for which he had consulted several universities ; but all the remedies he applied were of no use.

This tumour was bigger than one's fist, exceedingly painful, and had an external eminence, by which it was easy to determine the extent of it: his pulse was irregular, he was troubled with frequent *syncope*s, want of sleep, and an universal uneasiness.

I proposed to him the use of my remedy, as a dissolvent very fit to dissipate his tumour : he drank with it a chalybeated wine, in which *capillus veneris* was infused : after continuing his medicines one month; he was perfectly cured.

This tumour was schirrhous, notwithstanding it was painful; which might possibly be from the compression it occasioned on the parts to which it adhered : I have no other particular remark to make on this disorder. It is four or five and twenty years since he was cured ; he has perceived nothing of the matter since that time, but is now in perfect health.

Me. Couturiere, milliner to her Royal Highness, my neighbour and very good friend, was afflicted in 1703 with a tumour in her breast, which in a short time grew to a considerable size, being very painful and hard, and tending directly to a *carcinoma*.

She used the same remedy, and was entirely cured in one month, having never since felt the least pain in that part. I have cured great numbers both at court, and in the city, with the same medicine ; and very lately a lady of the first rank, but out of respect I forbear to mention her name, though she has made no secret of the cure. However, if these complaints are inveterate, the best way is either to do nothing at all to them, or to proceed forthwith to amputation. They have ever been looked upon as cases of the most difficult cure, and are deemed incurable, when ulcerated. They are cruciating and insupportable on account of their pain and stench; and there is nothing but crude mercury, taken inwardly, which by friction is able to blunt the points of the acids that wear away the flesh in the parts afflicted. And when it is impossible to attain to a cure, nothing is more fit to mitigate the pain, prevent a further progress, and oppose corruption and a stench ; and to these ends I have often administered it in such miserable circumstances.

When our court attended the Queen of Spain as far as the borough



of Cony, in 1702, I was, in returning back, seized in the city of Fousan, with a fit of the gravel, which was so very violent, that I imagined that it would cut me off; I voided in the bath which was prepared for me, small stones and gravel with inconceivable torture, and the liquor which came away was sincere blood instead of urine.

I was brought to Turin, where Mr. Fousage, at that time first physician to her Royal Highness, ordered me medicines for three months, at the end of which I relapsed into my former condition, voiding stones and gravel with excessive pain.

At length I began to take my dissolvent into consideration; imagining, that these stones were formed and conglutinated by a thick lymph, which, if it could be rendered fluid, would prevent any further concretions of this sort; and to this end I made use of my remedy: the consequence was, that all my symptoms ceased, and I was cured, having from that time to this felt not the least touch of my complaint. It is true, indeed, that at certain seasons I take a few doses of the medicine, which I believe secures me against a relapse.

I am the first to whom I ever administered this remedy in such a case; but I am not the last. I have given it since to many persons under the like complaints, and always with good success. It is not less efficacious in retensions of urine from a viscous jelly. M. le Baron de Chainaye Nisar has experienced it to his satisfaction. For four years together he could not make water without the most exquisite pain, and great striving: he took this remedy, and in a short time he urined with a full stream, without any pain at all: he looked upon the good success of the medicine as a prodigy, having tried a great number of other things to no purpose. He returned home overjoyed, and took a good stock of the pills with him the last Autumn, 1723. M. le Chevalier de Morete could make no water for five days together without the assistance of my dear friend M. Ciccognini, and two other physicians of great note: that gentleman had the humanity for this patient, to desire him to send for me: he took my remedy, and made water that same day.

I have a fresh case of the like nature, where the same remedy was given with the same success. But these narratives lead me too far out of the way; so I shall suppress this with many others, notwithstanding a number of instances carry along with them the merit of persuading; for a single cure might be imputed to mere chance.

It appears then that crude mercury is serviceable in the gravel, that it brings it away, and prevents stony concretions by destroying the viscosity of the lymph, which conglutinates the tartareous particles of the blood.

These viscosities occasion much the same symptoms of the stone itself, and if they do not produce such exquisite pains they are however frequently attended with a suppression of urine, by stuffing up the tubes which should convey it into the bladder. In such a case, as well as in many others, mercury, by the rotundity of its particles, and its motion, is capable of breaking, dividing, dispersing,



and consequently, subtilising and destroying the coagulation of the lymph, and that with great speed; and at the same time it blunts the points of the acids, and forces them to let go whatsoever they are connected with; thus every thing is restored to its natural figure.

Me. Campagnole hostess of the Woman without a Head, one of the most noted houses of entertainment in Turin, was subject to a cruel cholic; this disease had reduced her to the last extremity. In 1722 she was seized with this malady in the middle of the night. Living in the neighbourhood, she sent for me: I found her in a deplorable condition, and gave her a double dose of my mercury; soon after, her tormenting pains ceased, and before morning she voided by stool, a pail full of excrements and water. The next day she voided another pail full of water, and so was entirely freed of her complaint to her very great surprise: for in the last fit before this she was tortured a whole month between pains and remedies, yet this medicine made all quiet in a few minutes after it was taken.

The prodigious and hasty evacuation in this case, was the effect of purgatives, but mercury had its share in contributing to it, by breaking the humours and rendering them more fluid and fit to be discharged. This woman had all the lower belly stuffed with viscus and acid humours, which occasioned a tention and irritation in the intestines. The peristaltic motion of the bowels was weakened and depraved, which nothing better could re-establish than mercury, by the rolling motion of its particles. It at the same time blunted the points of the acids which had occasioned convulsive twitchings in the parts; and the crispatation of the fibres being removed, the several matters contained within the bowels, did naturally take the road of the anus, following the mercury, which by its own proper weight is ever determined downwards.

Mercury, when it is received into the stomach, is blended with whatever it meets there; and as the lacteal vessels imbibe whatever is subtle enough to enter their orifices, the more volatile part of the mercury is taken up by them, and conveyed into the blood, which it renders more fluid and soft; and what remains in the intestines, takes downwards, and pursues the course of the purgatives; opening and subtilising the acids and viscosities which it meets in the ways, and carrying off whatever is viscid, or unserviceable to the economy, without meddling with any thing good or necessary. That this is truth appears from the patient's being not in the least weakened or discomposed by these immense evacuations.

In 1710, one M. De la Pierre, governor to a German Lord who was at Hodemie, but whose name I cannot remember, had an inveterate itch, which eluded the force of all the medicines he could hear of in France or Holland. He took of my mercury, and without the assistance of any other remedy, he was perfectly cured in three weeks: he went away very well satisfied, and the next year he wrote to me to send him the medicine to the Hague, one of his friends being under the same misfortune.



M. Carrett, my very good friend, commissary of war in the armies and hospitals of France, who had the superintendency of the hospital of Oulx, at the same time that I was surgeon-major of the same hospital, being at Valence on the Po. in 1710, was afflicted with an ill-favoured red teter, which spread over half his face, and was elevated above the surface of the skin the thickness of a finger.

Several remedies were recommended to him, which he refused, saying, I shall go shortly to Turin, where my friend Belloste has a medicine that will infallibly do the business.

He came to me as soon as convenient, and I gave him my mercury; which was so speedily effectual, that he perceived himself sensibly amended after the first dose; after the second the teter was apparently diminished, and after the fourth it was hardly to be discerned. However he continued the use of it; but after the fifth dose, there was not the least sign of it remaining. He is now at Paris, and is ready to witness the truth of what I write

The same thing happened with no less expedition to M. le Comte d'Argue, a Bavarian gentleman. As he was returning from France, where he had been for his health, he was seized in savoy with pains in his shoulders, and a large parcel of pustules which covered his whole face, and rendered it extremely deformed; this was in 1723, he sent for the very learned M. Ciconigni to advise with him, whether it would be better to put himself under a course of medicine at Turin, or to return to France. Our judicious physician recommended me, and my remedy, which he thought sufficient to extricate him from the difficulty he laboured under. After twice taking it, he found his pains were abated, and his pustules shrunk up; and after the fourth dose they all disappeared, to his great astonishment, who thought it no less than a prodigy. He continued the repetition of it some short time, and stocked himself with a good quantity when he went away.

The speedy dispatch the mercury made with this tumified teter, is an undeniable proof of its mixing with the lymph. It operates in the same manner in teters, itch, and pimples of the face, and other parts of the body, as it does in schirrhous tumours, schrophula, carcinoma, wens, &c.; it removes the stoppage of the glands, by destroying the acids which caused it; and the lymph conveying it to the pores of the skin, its volatile particles fly off with rapidity by insensible perspiration; and rubbing against the acids which lurk in the cuticular pores, they carry them away with them. Thus are the fibrous mamillæ, which were before compressed and rendered inactive, restored to their pristine form, elasticity, and office: the skin grows clear, and the orifices being unlocked, perspiration goes on as before.

Although the disorders, which I have described, were attended with a variety of symptoms, yet were they all produced from the same cause. The softer preparations of mercury, as Ethiop's Mineralis, and the powder of algaroth, are serviceable in external



application, as they exhaust the acids, open the skin, and so work a cure. But a salivation would in all likelihood ensue, should any of the acid particles, when blended with the mercury, re-enter into the road of circulation; this makes me affirm that crude mercury taken by the mouth, is more effectual, certain, and expeditious.

In 1719, my adjutant's son in the Hospital of Briançon was sent to me at Turin, afflicted with an universal leprosy; his head was in a sad condition and his whole body covered with white scales: I shewed him in these circumstances to some of my brethren, one of which was M. Calcan, Master Collegiate Surgeon, who entered upon the office of Syndic, since I was made Prior of the new college founded by the King.

I kept him in my house, and he ate at my table without any distinction: he was not confined to his bed or chamber: he took a pill every other evening towards bed time. At six week's end I shewed him to the same gentleman with his head and neck as clean as a pearl, and perfectly cured; though he walked abroad, all the city over, every day during his course.

The leprosy and venereal disease are sisters, and of the same parentage, according to the opinion of most learned men. Mercury has at all times been acknowledged for the specific in such diseases, since it was first discovered and administered. It has certainly an absolute power over these ferments: the more desperate the case, the more vigour does the remedy exert to destroy it: they are a kind of hydra which this Hercules delights to quell. It is needless to illustrate its mechanical operation upon these poisons: it is well known and visible enough, and can never be called in question. This was the first leper I had under my care. This disease though so very formidable, gives way to mercury rightly prepared, as readily as the slightest of them all.

In 1721, I was commanded by Her Royal Highness to attend Madam la Comtesse Busquet, in the city of Equiere, who had been confined to her bed for four months by a violent and painful *sciatica*.\* She could not stir in the least without giving herself mortal agonies, in spite of all the care and skill of her physician, M. Gofe. This lady being constrained to void her excrement under her, there was danger that a mortification might seize her hinder parts; wherefore without delay I proposed to her physician the use of my mercury, which he very readily came into.

She had not taken above three doses, before the violence of her pain was over; and after the fourth she felt no more of it: after the seventh she left her bed, and began to walk. The abundance of phlegm which this medicine discharged by the first doses surprised both the patient and the Physician. The patient wondered that she felt an abatement of her misery in proportion to the evacuation, which did not in the least weaken her; and the physician was at a

\* A gouty or rheumatic disease affecting the hips, which being the centre of motion to the body, makes the slightest effort to move a torture.—Editor.



loss to account for such extraordinary success, otherwise than by enchantment; which occasioned him to express his surprise to me in a letter full of respect and esteem. The letter was read to her Royal Highness by my dear friend M. Ciconigni, who was himself not a little transported at the speedy and salutary effect of so simple a remedy, as well as at the tender and obliging expressions of the patient and the physician.

The gout in its infancy, the rheumatism, the sciatica, and all diseases of this nature, are to be cured by swallowing crude mercury, as frequent experience has assured me on many occasions. They are all of the same nature, though they pass under different names, and affect different parts of the body; as one cause produces them; so will one remedy destroy them; and by that very kind of mechanism which I illustrated, when I spoke of percussion, friction, shaking, dislodging, and taking off the points of the acids.

The expeditious action of mercury on such minute bodies, cannot, in my opinion, be otherwise accounted for; since nothing has so quick a passage into the blood, nor is conveyed so soon to the parts afflicted; this happening several times in the space of a natural day. On this score it comes to pass, that what it has begun in its first frictions, it finishes in its subsequent ones. I grant that it goes off in perspiration, and escapes partly by a stool: but then by repeating the dose the operation is continued without interruption; otherwise the acids which take up their residence in the pores and membranes could not be dislodged, and broken to pieces, as it happens in *sciatica* and rheumatism; their points standing on end, and not interwoven with any substance that can screen or defend them; when the nutritious juice comes laden with mercury to the membranes penetrated, and as it were larded with these sharp, keen spiculæ, the small particles of the mercury expand themselves over the membranes, and being of a requisite solidity, do by their rolling motion, shock, tear to pieces, and destroy the aforesaid points, which afterwards regurgitate into the veins. I can find no other idea of the speedy termination of this sort of disease: those who have an understanding more extended than mine, may possibly give a more rational account of the matter.

The wife of M. Ressant, a bookseller in Turin, aged about 33, was sent to her husband from Briançon, under a complication of diseases. She had been under the management of the best physicians in Briançon for four years. Among other complaints she had a small fever, a difficulty of breathing, a pain in her stomach, a very stinking breath, a sorry complexion, and a monstrous swelling of her right thigh and leg; for which last malady she had used divers mineral waters without any benefit, both by way of baths and fomentations; in a word she was pronounced incurable. Her husband finding her in so miserable a condition, had so much confidence in me as to commit her entirely to my conduct; and indeed it was with some reluctance that I undertook this chronical disorder.



However having been convinced by a great deal of experience, that in these desperate cases especially, mercury gives proof of its force, virtue, and superiority above all other medicines, I no longer remained in suspense, but gave her my remedy without any other preparation.

The first doses made some comfortable effects upon her; most of her symptoms ceased; her pulse was much mended, the pain of her stomach and the stinking breath were no longer perceived; the thigh and leg were less pained, and their size was somewhat abated. Thus she went on for sixteen doses, when her menses obliged her to desist. When they were over, she resumed her medicine, and without any conflict was this formidable coagulation of humours dissolved; and the liquors recovered their fluidity after two and forty doses of the mercury. The thigh and leg grew supple, the coagulated matter, made fluid, returned with the mercury into the blood: in short, in the month of May, the present year, 1724\* the mercury had the effect of frictions on this patient; it excited salivation; with this difference, that it was so exceedingly mild as scarcely to warm the mouth; this was the only time I ever knew it produce such a consequence, though I have given it above six months together.

Here is sufficient room to admire the salutary effects of mercury, which one way or other will infallibly destroy every thing that is capable of afflicting the body.

To enter rightly into the mechanical *rationale* of this matter, it should be observed that in the disorder of the thigh and leg, there was no extravasation. The coagulated liquors were entirely contained within the glands and the external vessels; a proof of which is, that notwithstanding the size of those parts, the patient could still walk; the organical parts being unaffected. The weight and the pain which the tension occasioned where what chiefly incommoded her.

A dissolution being once made in the vessels and glands, it is natural enough that the liquor having recovered its fluidity, should re-enter the vessels, mix with the other fluids, and pursue the course of circulation.

The subtle parts of the mercury, being intimately mixed with what was dissolved, caused those fluids to ascend, so that they were received by the vessels of the throat, which became distended, the orifices of the salivary canals were strained and dilated, afforded a passage to the separated humours; and then the thigh and leg diminished considerably.

This salutary flux lasted about eight days, and re-established the gentlewoman in such a condition of health as surprised her: she is now actually under my management, and I hope to reduce her thigh and leg to their natural state.

If crude mercury did imbibe acids, as many persons have fancied, it must in this case have been sufficiently stocked with them to have made havoc with the inward parts of the mouth in the discharge;

\* Just a century has this important communication, as to the merits of mercury, waited to obtain a popular knowledge and approbation.—Editor.



whereas nothing more was perceived than a small heat. In these diseases the morbid particles are not so pungent, keen, and corrosive as the acids in venereal cases, which makes the bones carious, and eat away the flesh, without any assistance from the admixture of other matters.

The thick viscous matter which nourishes the hair being abundantly increased through the obstructions formed in the skin where it is planted, caused it to grow in such plenty, that the whole leg and thigh was perfectly covered therewith: on which score I look upon the malady of these parts to have arisen from an exceedingly tenacious viscosity, stagnating in the capillary vessels and glands of the skin, which being inconceivably numerous, at last formed so considerable a substance.

It may then be taken for granted, that mercury, sooner or later, penetrates into, and breaks the connexion of these matters; that it disengages them from the acids which embarrass them, and so restores them to their original fluidity.

If we consider attentively, what mercury has done in one cure, we shall be able to judge of its effects in all others, though of a different kind; and we must esteem it the favourite of nature, which in such a variety of operations and productions, acts by the same mechanical laws. I have remarked also from the effects which mercury produces in so many different subjects and diseases, that its way of acting is constantly one and the same: as nature is inimitable in her works, so is mercury in its operations.

I have at this time under my care, diseases that are inveterate and of very difficult cure. I administer this same remedy in all; and from the day I begin with it, I form hopes of a favorable issue, though it may be some years first: however all the known and useful means have been already applied to no purpose.

Respect forbids me to name one of my patients, and some others discretion will oblige me to conceal. But let the reader judge of what may be done from what has been done: the cures already related, have their merits, and those I shall relate hereafter will have no less. And now I think, I have said enough to give an idea of the effects of this admirable remedy.

The first wife of M. Rousseau, in 1712, was afflicted for near four months together with several disorders. She was visited by many of our physicians, who, after they had carefully examined her symptoms, were of opinion that a *solium*\* had brought her into a consumption: and this because she vomited constantly every day a little while after she had eaten. These gentlemen agreed that my mercury was the only medicine which could be of benefit to her.

The very first dose took off her vomiting, and the rest, which were twelve in all, entirely recovered her.

Cases often occur, where it is next to impossible that a physician of the greatest capacity should not be mistaken. A girl who wove hair

\* A huge worm.—Editor.



for my perriwig-maker, in 1712, being about fifteen or sixteen years old, was for three weeks together blooded and purged, besides other remedies and operations, and all to so little purpose, that at last she was seized with a violent and frequent hiccup, which prevented her from swallowing or retaining any thing in her stomach. Her physician took his leave of her, and desired her mother to send for a priest to give her the sacraments. In this conjuncture M. De la Touche, came to me and desired me to see the girl. I did so, and after examining her, and feeling her pulse, I thought I perceived in her eyes some symptoms of worms. I took M. De la Touche home with me, and delivered to him a dose of my mercury, with directions to give it her by degrees, in four small pills, with a little wine, and that forthwith. The first parcel she took stopped the hiccup, and she swallowed the others with ease; a little after which she vomited up a worm as thick as one's finger, and half an ell long, with a big head. The persons who were about her, to my great vexation, threw into the house of office.—She was perfectly cured in a few days.

Many physicians look upon worms of the body with a kind of indifference; they will tell you they are domestic animals, and serviceable in consuming certain superfluities of our bodies.

But after all, the more they multiply, and the more they increase in bulk, the more nourishment they require. If, in such cases, a slender diet should be enjoined, they would entirely consume it; and if that were too little to suffice them, they would prey upon the parts wherein they are contained.

All these things considered, it cannot be denied that it is best to prevent their increase, to get rid of them as soon as may be, and drive out of the intestines, such harbingers of corruption as are nourished at our expence, and whose lives will be productive of our death.

Worms of the stomach and intestines are destroyed by mercury; it is to them a powerful poison; it not only kills them, but destroys their very seeds. To this all agree who have written of mercury: and experience vouches for its truth.

Almost every thing is full of worms; our food abounds with them; their seeds get into our bodies a multitude of ways. They float in the blood and other liquors, in all ages, sexes, and constitutions.\* They devour indifferently what they meet, be it good or bad. But the *solium* feeds on nothing but chyle; and therefore a consumption is inevitable where this creature resides.

\* This species of animal animalcula passes under the denomination of worms; but the principle of their production and existence is precisely that of the supposed sexual or spontaneous production which is common to almost all liquid matter. An animal of any size, even that vainly boasted thing the human body, is nothing more or less than a compound of animalcula, and it is analogically probable, that the smallest animalculal identity, which the microscope brings within human vision, is itself a compound of animalculal infinitesimals. A curious book, which shall be some day reprinted, also a century old, called 'Telliamed,' which makes water a common parent, asserts the visible exist-



The worms of the stomach and gut deposit seed and excrements, which mixing with chyle are carried into the blood, causing fevers of an uncommon nature, whether by corruption, or by the coagulation which their acrimony occasions in the blood.

In all these cases, I believe, there is nothing which answers the end better than mercury, on account of its separating from the blood, and carrying away along with it whatsoever is noxious: it promotes perspiration, and by its percussion, and the rotundity of its particles, dissolves, separates, and subtilises all manner of coagulations, which may be reckoned the source of most fevers, besides many other disorders.

In short, be they worms, a wrong use of natural things, or an ill chosen food, that have introduced into the blood such particles as are apt to excite febrile fermentations; or if an effervescence be kindled in the blood for want of due perspiration; mercury overcomes all. When mercury is well dispersed, its parts divided as much as possible, and in this condition conveyed into the stomach, it is sucked up, and, as it were, devoured by the lacteal veins, and conveyed into the mass of blood.

Mr. Lewenhoeck has observed, that the blood consists of globular particles; and so does mercury. Wherefore it is impossible they should enter into such contract with each other, as to be linked together; for the globules of mercury are extremely smooth.

The motion of the blood, and of the lymph that accompanies it, causes these small globules to strike one against another; by which shock reiterated, all the particles both of the mercury and the blood are broken, separated, and multiplied to infinity. It is by such a manner of acting that the coagulations of the blood are destroyed; that they become more subtile and fluid, and are less disposed to obstruct and embarrass one another as they move in the smallest vessels. The globules of mercury united with the lymph, being exceeding smooth, and containing, in proportion to their bulk, a very large quantity of matter, do insinuate themselves into all places where the rapidity of their motion carries them; forcing all obstacles which oppose their course, and dispersing every thing that is unnaturally united; which by the motion it receives is hindered from reuniting, and thus is hurried away to some or all of the emunctories, according to the inclination of nature, or the disposition of the subject.

These particles being, as I said before, united with the lymph, render it more fluid, penetrating, active, sweet and balsamic, and by consequence more fit to increase the nutritious juice in the several parts of the body, and more proper to repair the losses it has

ence of animalculal human beings, or figures of human resemblance, through microscopic vision. If this be correct, it will ever remain a question, whether animals and animalcula spring from spontaneous, or sexual and generative production; but a question of no importance, as relates to the life and death of each animal identity. This is also Dr. Darwin's idea of the process of nature, in animal production; and it goes to establish something more than theory, to account for the existence of every kind and particle of fixed matter.—Editor.



undergone through the violence of diseases; taking away, at the time, the fatal causes which produced them.

If what I have observed of mercury be true, it must be acknowledged, that it has in it nothing that is corrosive or vicious; if it be capable at any time of assuming such qualities, it must be when it is divested of its natural figure and motion.

It must, therefore, be the violence of fire, which, altering the figure and motion of mercury, wherein consists its force and virtue, renders it corrosive; which is the case when it is incorporated with salt and vitriol to make corrosive sublimate.

If mercury may be judged of from its effects, surely crude mercury has the best title to be called *mercurius dulcis*;\* for that which is prepared with fire, and goes by that name, is capable of uniting with acids in the body, and thereby forming an acid. So that not to incur the danger of raising a painful salivation, it must be given but in small quantities, and that seldom. I have been a witness to the terrible consequences of it upon a lady of distinction who fell a sacrifice to the remedy and her own opinion.

When crude mercury enters into the body by frictions or fumigations, it mixes with the lymph; but then it penetrates also into the veins and arteries.

Such a collection of globular corpuscles striking against the arterial blood with a direction contrary to the course of it, acts upon it in the manner of a bank or dam.

If the blood and spirits yield to such a shock, their motion must of necessity be much weakened, and even suppressed as far as the friction extends; so that they will inevitably stand still, or move backwards: this conflict can be of no service to the patient, but must produce such symptoms as always attend an impeded circulation: I have beheld too many instances of such sad cases. If it enters the pores of the small nervous fibres which terminate at the skin, it will by its volatility penetrate into the trunks of the nerves, and oppose the course of the animal spirits, thereby occasioning a palsy.

These effects are not produced by mercury, as crude mercury. It is the manner of applying it which causes it to oppose the course of the animal spirits, and occasions these extravagancies, besides many more which I forbear to name.

It is plain then, that there is a difference between transmitting crude mercury through the pores of the skin, and giving it at the mouth at certain intervals; for in this latter way, it intimately mixes with what it finds in the stomach and chyle; it enters the blood, it associates with the lymph, it follows the natural and voluntary motion of it, it facilitates its course, and enlivens its motion, it renders it more fluid, subtile, and fit to pass: it destroys the obstacles which oppose its passage and then uniting with it, they penetrate every where: all this is brought about with the utmost gentleness and expedition, without constraint, agitation, or tumult: and yet its operations are divine and surprising.

\* Sweet mercury.—Editor.



Acid spirits injected into the veins, occasion terrible symptoms, yet they are serviceable when taken in by the mouth.

The viper, which, by sending its poison into the blood through a puncture of the skin, excites such fatal symptoms, is of no ill consequence if eaten, but on the contrary is corrected and rendered wholesome by the ferment of the stomach.

Some persons have taken upon them to run down the use of crude mercury, and render it odious, by bringing upon the stage the accidents which attended the workers in mercurial mines.

Mr. Lemery, is of opinion, that the palsy which sometimes attacks these people, is produced from the sulphurs which arise from the mercury; which entering the pores, do fix in the nerves, and cause this cold disease, by stopping up the passage of the animal spirits.

If his notion is right, there is then great reason indeed to apprehend bad consequences from frictions and fumigations.

It is not absurd to believe that those workmen, being continually surrounded with the volatile vapours of mercury, do suck them in with the air at their nostrils; presently after which they are elevated until they meet with opposition from the internal convex part of the *cranium*, being not able to penetrate or pass through its pores, and then they fall down again, like water in a boiling pot, when stopped by the lid. These vapours having at length required a bulk, the small globules drop down again by their own proper weight towards the basis of the *cranium*, compress the nerves in their origin, and so produce the palsy. The same thing happens to gilders for the same reason, but more frequently; for they make use of mercury over a fire, which elevates it more easily, so that they breathe in the very substance of it.

Thus it appears, that this is not the effect of any ill quality of mercury, but an accident produced by the compression of another body.

At the time that I was surgeon-major of the hospitals of Briançon and Oulx, we had, at a favourable season of the year, many pocky patients confined to the use of the grand remedies; they were closely locked up in their several cells day and night. I could not observe that the boys who were appointed to attend them, and who constantly slept with them, did ever receive the least inconvenience by breathing in the mercurial vapours.

I had a captain under my care at Briançon in a *volvulus*, whom I prevailed upon to swallow down two pounds of crude mercury, which remained six whole days in his body, without doing him any manner of harm. And it is observable, that such persons as have leaden balls lying in their limbs for many years, and often for their whole lives, never feel any inconvenience on that score.

But after all this, to set about to convince mankind that crude mercury is not mischevious, is not an easy task. Many believe it a corrosive poison. They will tell you, it is the cause of ulcers of the throat in salivations; and if they speak so favourably of it, as to grant that it is not corrosive of itself, yet will they maintain that it becomes



so when blended with the venereal acids: this opinion has been received and advanced by very famous authors.

I think, however, that the contrary opinion may easily be supported by the help of a little reflection, provided prejudice be absolutely set aside.

The ulcers which afflict the throat in persons under a salivation, proceed, according to the notion I have of the matter, from the acids contained in the pocky ferment: mercury shocks it, dislodges it, sets it in motion, and conveys it along with the lymph, until it has procured it some favourable issue, by the way of a *crisis*, sometimes by the mouth; at other times by stool, urine, or perspiration.

It must be considered, that in salivations, the acrimonious and corrosive acids of the *virus*, which were distributed throughout the whole mass of fluids, as likewise those which were conjected in nodes, pustules, glands, cancers, or ulcers, are all conveyed and conducted by their several tubes, into the salivary canals, so that they may be discharged at the mouth; in which consists a salivation. These being thus reunited, and passing all through the same place, it is natural enough that they should make impressions on it, and that such delicate parts as the throat and the mouth, should be lacerated, cut and ulcerated by the quantity of these keen, sharp, and corrosive little bodies, without the mercury having any share in the matter, more than that of having set them in motion, in order to the obtaining their discharge.

Mercury, when sent into the body by friction, gives to part of the liquors a different turn from what they have had before; as I have already remarked. This stroke of retrogradation, which acts from the circumference towards the centre, subtilises the lymph, elevates it upwards, gives it a violent and rapid motion, and determines it towards the head and throat, which becomes swollen by such an amassment of lymph poured in upon it from almost all parts of the body; and being too much to be contained in the cavities of the vessels, the orifices of the salivary vessels are by the effort of an irresistible tension, open and dilated, and so yield a passage to this abundance of the lymphatick humour. But the mercury not having circulated according to the natural course of the lymph, having only been elevated together with it, it is impossible that it should by any rolling motion, break or destroy the points of the acids, which passing by the throat and mouth in an unaltered condition, do there occasion very troublesome and painful ulcers and lacerations.

The only motion which the lymph and mercury have on this occasion, is a simple sublimation upwards, which stops there; so that should the salivary canals be obstinately occluded, the patient must be suffocated. It appears then, that in such a conjuncture, the mercury and lymph are as it were in a state of rest; that the subsequent evacuation, and the running off of the lymph and mercury makes no alteration in order of their situation; the action, though violent, terminates in the throat. If mercury destroys the points of



acids, it must roll along and circulate peaceably with them, by a continued and reiterated motion; which cannot be brought about by frictions and fumigation, nor by any preparation of mercury, be it what it will. When the *crisis* after frictions, is determined by stool or urine, the mercury would make fine work if joined with acids; ulcers of the *anus*, bladder, and *urethra* would be the inevitable consequences of such a union, which however do never happen.

If crude mercury were capable of uniting with acids, bad symptoms would appear after friction, by which so large a quantity is made to enter the body. Those to whom I have given it by the mouth for above six months together, as in scrophulous cases, where acids abound in extraordinary cases, would if such union were possible, have undoubtedly been sensible of some irritation, heat, or excoriation; and yet I never heard them complain of any such things.

Mercury in order to its being sublimated, must be in a state of rest, so that the fire which is under it, may lay hold on its round particles in order to raise them aloft together with itself, which is the case with mercury as made use of by gilders.

When crude mercury is taken by the mouth in pills, although its particles are exceedingly subtile and divided, notwithstanding the purgatives with which it is mixed, it is very speedily communicated to the liquors, it swims in a fluid, and is a perpetual motion; on which score it cannot be sublimed. The warmth of the body is a spur to it, animates and increases its motion, and causes it to penetrate every where; it never quits the liquors with which it is mixed, but in getting to the emunctories.

Men of very great skill, who have no consummate knowledge of mercury, are of opinion that some pounds of it may be taken at the mouth as in a *volvulus*, without occasioning any ill consequence; but that it is very dangerous to take only a few drams of it, because that then it may sublime by the heat of the body. This opinion has been received by a great number of persons, and yet nothing can be more false.

M. le Duc, a physician, whom I mentioned before, observed at Smyrna, that most of the women that were desirous of looking handsome, fresh, and in good plight, did frequently swallow two drams of crude mercury without any mixture.

When some pounds of it are swallowed, if it meets with no stop in the intestines, it quickly passes through, retaining the same weight it had when it was taken. When it was swallowed in a small quantity, it remains a longer time in the body, it shocks, it detaches, breaks, and drives into the intestines whatsoever it meets with in the stomach, that is, greasy, slimy, viscous, acrid and acid: it acts in the same manner in the intestines, mixes with the substances, and rolls along with them, so that it cannot be sublimed, but escapes out just the same as it was taken in, carrying along with it whatever is capable of rendering the blood acrimonious, altering the ferments of the stomach, or causing a bad digestion.



It appears then, that great advantages may be obtained from the use of it, and that those persons are very much in the wrong who conceive prejudice against it; such a one and such a one, they say, were attacked with such and such complaints upon the use of it, therefore it is undoubtedly bad and dangerous: and some there are who are frightened out of their wits at the very name of it; and would give themselves over for poisoned, should the least quantity of it enter their bodies.

This error is received and cherished by a set of prejudiced persons, who, though otherwise well qualified to judge and determine concerning the effects of mercury, without distinguishing as to the best and worst manner of using it; which notwithstanding makes a very considerable difference.

If what has been said above, and what shall be said hereafter, be considered with a little attention, it will appear that mercury ought to be taken by the mouth, just as we find it in its raw, fluid, or metallic state, if we would feel the benefit of it; or mixed with gentle purgatives.

That all the extravagant effects of it in frictions and fumigations, are produced no otherwise than by an unnatural motion which it gives to the spirits and liquors, as I have already explained.

That it can at no time become corrosive, but when the action of fire causes it to lose its form and motion; for then it may be linked and loaded with acids, and constitute by such a mixture, a sort of sublimate.

Though crude mercury is infinitely divisible, yet its most subtile parts, even in vapour, do ever retain the rotundity of their figure; they can never, without the violence of fire, become pointed, hooked or keen; therefore they can neither hook nor be hooked, as long as they retain their spherical figure, and continue as they always do, smooth and polite; and the heat of the body is not sufficient to produce any alteration on even the most fine and subtile of its parts. In the ebullition and fermentation which it undergoes when it is mixed with, and wrought upon by spirits of nitre, aqua fortis, and other spirits, its parts are only divided and rendered imperceptible, their spherical figure is no ways destroyed; a proof of which is, that these spirits are softened by the mixture and rendered less pungent and corrosive; which shews that crude mercury may be with great justice called *mercurius dulcis*.

I might satisfy myself with relating the salutary effects which crude mercury has produced within my knowledge, without giving myself the trouble of explaining the mechanism of its action, in which it is like I may succeed but poorly, having no chemical principles to guide me, but laying down, according to mere nature, what has occurred to my conception. However, I was of opinion, that by showing in what manner it acts in the body, I might dispel the fears that have been raised of it, so that it might no longer be taken for a poison, but for the most gentle and sovereign of all remedies.



Thus I do my utmost in the justification of mercury; and to make it appear, that it is a friend to nature, and a capital enemy to diseases, and all kinds of corruption; that by an admirable mechanism, without incorporating, or being confounded with them, it dissolves, absorbs, spoils, drives out, destroys and corrects all vicious and heterogeneous matters; that not only taken by the mouth, but born externally its emanations are capable of securing the body against malignant and infectious air, of what kind soever it be, without exception.

All authors who have written of the pestilence, believe its cause to be a coagulation of the blood: if this opinion be true, what remedy can be true, what remedy can be more proper, than crude mercury?

M. le Begue, in his treatise on the pestilence of Marseille, says, that it had its origin from a multitude of the eggs of worms which infect the saliva, the food, the chyle, the nervous juice, and finally, the solid parts; that the heat of the stomach hatches these eggs, and then the young worms do greedily devour a good part of the aliments, by which they increase to a certain size; and that then they excite the first symptoms of the pestilence.

These worms are carried along with the chyle into the blood, where they hinder circulation.

According to this system, nothing can be more proper to destroy these worms, together with their seeds, than mercury. In a translation of J. James Scheuchen, he proposes Ethiop's Mineralis, a preparation of mercury, in the pestilence. He says, that according to the famous M. Boyle, the pestilence seldom attacks persons who live in the neighbourhood of mercurial mines. Upon consideration that mercury is extremely volatile, and that it transpires more than any other metal, I am of opinion that a body prepared with my mercury, or some other like is, provided it also carried about it little bags of mercury on the sternum, and near the emunctories, would be defended from infectious air by the atmosphere of mercurial vapour surrounding it. If we examine well into the matter, this is no other than one vapour, or one air overpowering another.

If there are eggs in the case, as in all appearance there are, they must be round, as well as the volatile particles of the mercury, and so they cannot unite, or be linked together; notwithstanding the globules of the mercury are capable of destroying or driving out those of the worms. In the collision of these small spherical bodies, those of the mercury having the greatest solidity, must break in pieces or dissipate the others.

Those who approve not of those reasons, may have recourse to antipathy, and then they will be sure to meet with matter enough to employ their wits upon.

These mercurial vapours do likewise keep at a distance from the body the contagious particles of the small pox. I know several persons who make use of no other preservative. Why then may it not have the same effect on the pestilential vapour? They differ but in regard to more or less.



The Arabian physicians have confounded these two diseases, and many others have followed their opinion. A great number of authors have fixed the cause of the small-pox to a heap of eggs of worms hatched in the body, sometimes sooner, sometimes later; that the pustules are full of these little worms, which gnaw away the skin, and so leave their marks behind them; that these eruptions are analogous to those of the pestilence; that the perspired matter in these patients is sour, and so is their breath, which smell of worms, and is, strictly speaking, no other than the seeds of worms, which communicates the disease to all persons that are near, and which from the quality of their ferments, are disposed to hatch.

This system, which carries with it greater probability than any other which has been advanced upon the subject, authorises the use of mercury, as an internal specific, and as a preservative when worn on the surface of the body.

A most illustrious sovereign prince has worn it about him more than fifty years, to preserve him from this disease: he is now above fourscore and never had it.

I always wear mercury about me: I am an old man, yet never had the disease. I observe that Mr. Lemery recommends it in his chemistry.

These two diseases are not the only ones which worms produce. Many learned men believe, that shingles, tetter, itch, scald-head, and almost all diseases of the skin, arise from worms, or the seeds of worms, as well as malignant fevers. According to Nicholas Hart-soker, the pestilence, venereal maladies, and all manner of epidemical disease are occasioned by worms, which will certainly devour the subject unless some specific remedy intervenes. Nothing is then more proper than mercury to cure the pestilence, small-pox, and all verminous diseases, as it destroys the putrefaction which hatches the worms, and dissolves the coagulation which are reckoned inseparable from these disorders; languors and weaknesses are the ordinary concomitants of epidemical diseases, than which there cannot be more sensible marks of coagulation.

Dissolutions do indeed sometimes accompany these diseases, but it is very seldom; and it is an easy matter to distinguish these causes one from another, by the symptoms.

Mr. Newton in a treatise of the pestilence, printed at Utrecht, asserts that worms are the cause of the pestilence, that they fix in clothes, linen, &c, that they multiply and live a long time, that when one wears such clothes, or opens such packs, &c. as are replete with them, they expand a sort of little wings, and by flying convey themselves into the internal parts of the body.\*

This opinion, which to most men of learning appears highly probable, shews that the remedy which I propose is better adapted to the nature of the malady, whether worms, or a coagulation of the blood, or both, be its essential cause, than any other. Messrs.

\* The system of animalculal procreation clearly explains this theory.--Editor.



Chicoineau, Verny, and Soulier, physicians deputed by the court for the management of the pestilence at Marseille, are of opinion that the venom of the pestilence is not of itself, contagious, but only with regard to the disposition of the subjects it meets with. Admitting this system to be true, the remedy which I propose, would suffice to correct such ill dispositions; and I would not scruple to make use of the amulet, were it but to delude the imagination, and to procure a tranquillity, by dissipating the fears which alone might be sufficient to kindle up the disease.

These gentlemen will have it, that the plague and small-pox have a very great relation to each other, that their symptoms are nearly the same, that what we call the master-pock, is a sort of bubo, or carbuncle, that both these diseases terminate in cuticular eruptions.

The very judicious and most candid M. Cicognini has assured me that in Italy, it is usual to wear crude mercury as a preservative against noxious vapours; and that the women carry it about them to prevent the jaundice, and its symptoms.

A gentleman of veracity and distinction told me upon his oath, that his mother almost every month was afflicted with severe attacks of a jaundice, accompanied with deliriums and convulsions: and that being one day in this sad condition, two capuchins came to visit her, who sent for some crude mercury, and hung it in a proper box on her sternum: upon which her symptoms vanished in a very little while; and she wore it eighteen months without being afflicted in the like manner, but having lost it, she relapsed into the same disorder: that she caused more of the medicine to be inclosed for her, which she wore all the remaining part of her life, without any other attack.

What consequence may be drawn from all this? If the mere vapour of two or three drams of mercury be alone sufficient to re-establish a calm in the whole economy, labouring under symptoms as bad as those of an epilepsy, and is able to prevent their return; what may not be expected from the same remedy, taken in substance, being mixed with gentle purgatives, which encounter with, or evacuate nothing but what is malignant, vicious, and superfluous, without meddling with the wholesome humours, which is truth in effect, notwithstanding it may purge more or less according to the disposition of the subjects. Mercury fails not to communicate itself to the chyle, the blood, and finally to the lymph, with which it associates, and as I have already observed, accompanies it in all parts of the body whereunto it is conveyed; and when it is arrived at the pores of the skin, its volatile parts escape in a mercurial perspiration, and being darted against the surrounding air, and meeting with the vapour of that which is worn externally, they together form a bulk capable of environing the body, and mundifying and clearing away whatsoever is vicious, malignant and epidemical in the air which we touch and breathe: thus in one part of the mercury which is taken at the mouth, voided by stool, another part circulates with the lymph, and the other is carried off by perspiration.



The stomach, according to some of the ancients as well as moderns, is the seat of almost all diseases; it is likewise this organ which receives the remedies designed for their cure.

When they are conveyed into this part, they must of necessity be mixed and confounded with ferments, which, according to their qualities will render them either hurtful or useless.

Be it as it will, this mixture increased or diminished, will always alter the virtue of the remedy, and frequently render its effects bad and uncertain.

This happens not with regard to mercury; it receives no manner of alteration in the stomach, nothing is able to restrain or mix with it; its separated volatile particles unite with the blood alone, changing neither their form nor nature. The heat of the body is not sufficient to sublime it; it continues to be what it was; and having made the tour of the whole microcosm, in order to attack and destroy the most dangerous enemies of it, it takes its leave in the same form it entered, excepting that part of it which goes off by perspiration.

All this is performed insensibly, without tumult, struggling or pain. It breaks and dissolves the thick and viscous matters which it meets with in the stomach and intestines, and destroys by its percussion and the motion of its round particles, all the indigested matters which are collected on the membranes, and renders them fluid, and fit to be discharged. That which is mixed with the blood, works the same effect in all places to which the lymph is conveyed; it forces all the obstacles and demolishes all the banks which oppose the current of the liquors.

By its figure it opens, dissipates, dilates and disconcerts all unnatural unions in the body.

These dissipated and broken matters are all conducted by a kind of crisis, to the emunctories of the body. And this is the manner in which I explain my notions of the actions of mercury in the stomach, intestines and liquors.

It is certain that all the heterogeneous matters which the mercury has disconcerted, shaken, dislodged, and broken, do follow the road and motion of the fluids.

The more gross and thick parts are conveyed into the intestines, as useless and superfluous.

The more subtile parts of these matters, are sent to the excretory glands; and by the rapidity of the motion which the mercury has communicated to them, they can make no stay there, but being blended with the volatile parts of the mercury, they go off by perspiration, and drag along with them whatsoever is vicious or foreign in the glands.

It is after that manner that I have before accounted for the speedy and surprising effects which this remedy did produce in obstructions of the skin and cutaneous glands.

All this is done by the mercury which is in the vessels, and ac-



companies the motion of the liquors: but as the nutritious juice, designed for the nourishment of the parts, must of necessity expand itself every where, and that this juice or balm of the blood must be impregnated with mercury, it cannot avoid striking and rubbing against the acids, which are collected in the pores of the membranes, in sciatica, rheumatism, and other points of the muscular parts.

Mercury must therefore break off their points, and by its motion and figure destroy them; no other thing being capable of working the same effect.

Behold then how mercury comes to be an absorbent and a dissolvent, terms in common use!

It absorbs, without losing itself with acids, or any other substance; and it dissolves, without having the least degree of heat. Is not this really a matter of speculation?

A lord\* of the first quality in our court, equally distinguished by his merit, births and employs, who does me the honor of his friendship, and was pleased to read over my *Treatise on Mercury*, in manuscript, being a competent judge of the value of a work, started to me a very judicious objection, which gave occasion to the short discourse which I am going to subjoin.

You assert, says he, that crude mercury is communicated to the blood and liquors; and yet so soon as it gets into the stomach, mixed and incorporated with your pills they are dissolved: the mercury then quitting the ingredients with which it was blended, all its divided particles reunite and form a globe which cannot remain long in the stomach, but passing the pylorus, enters the intestines, and is discharged by the anus; so that none of this mercury can be communicated to the liquors?

I agree, replied I, that the pills are soon dissolved by the humidity of the stomach, and the warm liquor in which they are swallowed: but then it must likewise be taken into consideration, that the mercury is very minutely divided in the pills; that during the time this dissolution is performing, the degree of heat which is in the stomach is exactly sufficient to elevate a sort of little cloud of the more volatile particles of the mercury. They quit the substances that withheld them, and insinuate themselves with ease and speed into the orifices of the lacteal veins, whose figure is exactly adapted to receive them; thus they are carried into the blood and accompany it in its circulation. What makes me conjecture that this is fact, is that I have observed, that in subjects where the stomach is loaded with gelatinous and viscous matters, which line its internal membrane, and close up the orifices of the lacteal vessels, these little globules getting at liberty during the time of the dissolution, and not being able to enter the vessels, do strike against these matters, divide, subtilize and loosen them. By this shock and the weight of the matters which fall to the bottom of the stomach, a small vomiting is sometimes excited, much to the patient's disadvantage; but it is only the first dose which produces this effect, and that very seldom.

\* Le Marquis de Rivarole.



Whether it be produced by these matters or not, it is certain that the subtile parts of mercury are very quickly communicated to the mass of blood. To be convinced of this, one need only to examine what it does in tumours, obstructions, the gravel, gout, sciatica, rheumatism, &c. With what expedition it operates in diseases of the skin, and of all other parts of the body.

To form a right judgment of the subtilty of the volatile particles of mercury, we need only consider the minuteness of the ramifications of the sanguinary and lymphatic vessels, into which it insinuates itself and mixes with those liquors.

An anatomist shewed me several membranes, some of which were as fine as a spider's web, whose vessels he had injected with such great art, that I was astonished at his skill and patience. By the assistance of a microscope one might discern millions of vessels within the space of four fingers breadth, two hundred of which, if put together, would have been scarce so big as a hair.

By this appears the necessity of keeping the humours in a fluid state, and with what ease coagulations, impediments, and obstructions may be formed.

It will occasion no surprise that I assert, that the subtile particles of the mercury penetrate into the orifices and the ramifications of the finest tubes, if it shall be considered, that mercury inclosed in a quill sealed up close, will nevertheless perspire and escape through the pores of the quill, which are utterly imperceptible.

The aqua hermetica shews the subtilty and lightness of the volatile particles of mercury; which, although it be boiled ever so many times in the water, and the water impregnated with its subtile particles, yet is its weight not sensibly diminished.

I have heard, though never made the experiment, that if a person keeps the end of his finger on crude mercury a good while together, holding in his mouth, at the same time, a piece of gold, the gold shall be tinged white, and that without any perceptible diminution of the mercury.

These are evidences of the prodigious volatility of mercury, and that nothing but gold can arrest its subtile particles; whether the figure of the pores of that metal be disposed to receive it, which seems likely, or that there is a certain analogy between these two metals which constrains them to seek and be united with each other. It penetrates, with the like ease, the cuticular pores, insinuating and communicating itself internally. It is notorious, and it falls out but too often, that mercurial applications, whether by way of unguents or plaisters, designed for the dissolution of tumours, though in small quantities, do raise salivations, to the surprise of the practitioner, who will be sure for the future to make use of them with greater caution than before.

It may be objected to me, that mercury worn about one should, for the same reason, produce the same effect, and especially since so subtile a vapour is capable of penetrating with great facility:



It is true that it penetrates, that it renders the lymph more subtile and fluid, and by consequence occasions the person to spit more easily and more copiously: I have seen the effect of it in myself and others; but this evacuation is beneficial and salutary, and cannot be called a salivation.

This simple vapour has neither substance nor force sufficient to oppose the course of the blood. It cannot make resistance enough to stop the currents of the liquors, and finally to sublime them to the upper parts. It is a kind of subtile fume, which gives way without resistance, which penetrates the liquors without struggle, which unites with them, and follows their natural motion, and which finally can never produce any noxious effect.

On the contrary, when it is applied externally in unguents or plaisters, it is admitted through the pores into the vessel in substance; and it is then capable of opposing the natural course of the fluids, as far as it extends; which in some subjects is sufficient to excite a sublimation and a real salivation; and this we see does frequently happen.

All these things suppose a commerce between the subtile matter of the first element and the mercury: I only touch upon this article, because it is beside my subject

It may be said, that the elevation of the volatile particles of mercury, which I suppose to be made in the stomach, is a sublimation; and yet I have said that it cannot be sublimed in the body, when taken at the mouth; here seems to be a contradiction.

The observations which I have made on mercury, on its action, and on its effects, when taken at the mouth, could never persuade me, that it could be so far sublimed as to rise up to the head, which I call a real sublimation—except in a few very particular cases; for example, that of M. Ressant.

I only believe that its volatile particles may in the stomach be elevated so far in the dissolution of the pills, as to mix with that admirable cream which results from digestion, I mean the chyle, so that they pass into the lacteals together: the capacity of the stomach, its heat and ferments, together with the subtile liquors with which it associates sympathetically, favour this manner of action.

When it enters these small veins, it pursues the course of the liquors which they have sucked in: it is then no longer susceptible of sublimation, being mixed with a fluid which is to it as a vehicle.

This objection has occasioned all these remarks, which have carried me a little from my subject.

The crisis excited by frictions, which is made by the mouth, cannot be performed without doing a violence to nature. It is shameful, odious, painful and dangerous. It demands the most diligent attendance and precaution. To procure the desired benefit from a salivation, it must be carried to excess, and the patient must be reduced to the last extremity. If he is weak, you must curb his flux, and in thus favouring him, your end is lost. All that you have



done, and he has undergone, will serve only to make the disease more rebellious, and difficult to be rooted out.

These imperfect cures add strength and vigour to the virus, the patient becomes disheartened, and will not run the risk of exposing himself a second time to the uncertainty and danger of such a method; and should the flux be carried to such a pitch as is requisite to exterminate the disease, he is then in the utmost peril of sinking under it.

It is a profanation of the mouth, to subject it to a function so disagreeable, so base, and, in a word, so unworthy of it.

It should seem to me more conformable to reason and nature, to chuse out in its stead an emunctory which nature has designed for the most vile and abject offices.

The intestines and anus have ever been accustomed to carry off the filth of the body: reason points out the same road to me when I undertake the cure of venereal disorders with my mercury, as likewise of all other maladies which arise from acids, the number of which is very considerable

This mercury being mixed with purgatives, the whole is determined downwards by stool: being taken at repeated intervals, the former doses are preparatives to those which succeed; they begin to effect a dissolution and fluidity of the humours, and the subsequent ones do with ease procure themselves to be evacuated, and that constantly in the most salutary and gentle manner.

Thus is a kind of flux obtained by the anus, which may be prolonged at pleasure, and I have many reasons to believe it preferable to the other.

It will be found extremely commodious for such persons as desire a cure to be wrought in the utmost privacy, without confinement to bed or chamber, or restriction from their usual way of living. It will answer all these ends, and the cure will be effected without the least danger, in a gentle and easy manner.

The evil preparations of mercury, usually given at the mouth, and the small advantage accruing from them, have brought salivations into vogue. Those who have been cured by this method, have set forth the excellency of this remedy; those who have died under it could tell no tales; those who have escaped a cure, have thought proper to decry it, believing that their disorder was above the reach of mercury. And indeed the different opinions of physicians concerning its virtues, nature and use, have given birth to a multitude of doubts, and all this for want of knowing it rightly.

Some praise it and others condemn it. One is for giving it crude, another looks upon it as a poison when unprepared. It has been disguised under a multitude of forms, yet when you take away its figure and motion, you rob it of its force and virtue.

When taken at the mouth, in the manner I give it, it drives out the impurities of the body, by the same way that the natural filth passes every day of our lives.

The intestines, to answer these ends without pain, are throughout



their whole internal surface, lined with a mucilage which defends them from being stimulated by the acid, bilious, and corrosive matters which pass through them in order to be discharged. And for this reason it is, that the venereal virus, when it takes this road, produces no mischievous consequences.

I shall doubtless, be told, that the bulk of mercurial vapour which I suppose to environ the body, mixing with the air we breathe, must of necessity, in respiration, enter into the lungs.

This is indisputably certain and inevitable; but it will there perform the part of a remedy, and a preservative against corruption; will render the respiration easy, by dividing and making fluid whatever was tenacious in the lungs; and may be of good service in asthmas and shortness of breath, as I have often experienced, though the effect will be much promoted by the internal use of it. If it should happen, which it very rarely does, that the workers in mercurial mines should be somewhat incommoded, it should be considered that they do their business underground, where the air is extremely loaded with volatile mercury, and that they breathe in a manner, nothing but mercury; that they spend their days there, and that it is nothing else but the immense quantity which produces the harm: besides, great numbers continue their whole lives in those places without receiving the least damage.

Those who have no ill apprehensions of mercury, but with regard to the salivation which it raises, may lay that fear aside when they take it as it ought to be prepared: it being bridled and restrained from playing any such pranks, and may be taken for a year together with the utmost safety, as the multitude of cures which I have performed with it do testify.

Therefore, having from infinite experience been convinced of its good effects, and reflecting seriously on the matter, I contrived a system by which I explained to myself the manner how these consequences were brought about.

And finally, I rested in this opinion, as I have already said, that the whole force and virtue of mercury consists in its volatility, its figure, and its motion. Whether I have determined justly upon the matter or not, let mercury act after this manner, or any other, as different as you can imagine, it is full satisfaction to me, that I have been able to convince the avowed enemies of mercury, of its goodness, use and virtues.

If my notions are wrong the whole blame rests upon myself, for I have borrowed none of them from any author. If any one ever wrote of mercury in the manner which I have done, his book never came to my knowledge. Experience has been my master, my director, and my guide, as well in this, as in all that I have hitherto, at any time, communicated to the public.

I am apt to believe that no person before me, ever made use of it for so long a time, and on so many different occasions; and upon the whole, I cannot but think, that if such a thing as an universal medicine be at all to be obtained, it must be from mercury.



The difference of climates, (for I have sent it to very remote parts) of seasons, of temperaments, of ages, of sexes, as diseases internal or external, varies not the efficacy of this remedy. It produces sometimes a little sooner, sometimes a little later, such consequences as are salutary. This seems somewhat to favor the opinion of those who believe that all diseases incident to mankind, are produced from one cause. If this opinion be just, then one remedy may cure them all.

The different effects, and the different diseases which this first cause of ferment produces in us, may depend entirely on the different dispositions which it meets with in the subjects; itself being ever the same, though under a disguise or mask.

Many things concur to make this difference in the temperaments. The influences which predominate at the time of conception or birth, climates, air and food, do all determine the inclination, the disposition, the strength, the weakness, the virtues, the vices, and the different qualities of the blood and humours.

There are diseases that are hereditary; there are some that are peculiar to certain countries, to the land, to the sea, to youth, to age, which have their singularities. There are disorders which are contracted by a wrong use of natural things, too much or too little exercise, and being accustomed to certain liquors.

About twenty-four years ago I was commissioned by my royal mistress to visit M. le Marquis de Luce, her gentleman of the horse, at Milan, who was dangerously wounded: the weather being at that time exceeding hot, I drank to quench my thirst for eight days together a certain black wine of that country, which being new and crude, it formed an acid in my blood, which in fourteen or fifteen days rendered the lymph so thick and sily, that the tartareous parts of the blood being of a sandy nature, were so concreted and united thereby, as to form little stones, which I believed would prove fatal to me. I got quite rid of this complaint by crude mercury, all other remedies proving ineffectual.

This sketch of a theory, which mercury gives me occasion to offer, (its volatile particles having elevated me quite above my sphere) gives me a suspicion, that besides the universal ferment, produced from the mixture of several seeds, which having been fermented together, gave rise to a vicious and contagious venom, which no time will be able to destroy, and whose impressions are communicated from generation to generation.

The ancients had not the least notion of such a ferment. It escaped the sagacity even of the great Hippocrates; though the Leprosy, so common in his days, was of this production, being according to several authors, no other than an inveterate pox.

As the seed was first infected with this *virus*, some are of opinion that the ill impression which it once received, can never be entirely effaced, but that it will descend to posterity for ever; that it multiplies more or less according to the disposition of subjects; that it



is capable of being communicated to either sex a multitude of ways, without the violation of chastity: that it is difficult to meet with a family which have not derived from their ancestors some sparks of this evil, which is grown very common since mothers have left off suckling their own children; that this leaven, which lies disguised under a great variety of forms, and so frequently puzzles the physician in his judgment and prognostics, may lie quiet, and be worn out in all appearance, but that its coagulative substance always remains; that it may spare the father and afflict the son or grandson: that it may be attached to the glandular parts, and continue there a long time in repose; that certain dispositions may rouse, exalt and put it in motion, so that it shall re enter the circulating fluids, and be deposited upon certain parts, producing gouts in the joints, rheumatisms in the muscular parts, gravel in the kidneys, scrophula in the glands, cancers in the breast, obstructions in the viscera, scurfs, itch, ulcers, leprosy, &c. The far greater part of which diseases are the real posterity of the pox.

In such a conjuncture, a judicious physician will find it no easy task to propose to his patient the use of a remedy which implies so ignominious a disease, when he is well assured that it cannot be the fruit of his own debauches. The very mention of mercury, which alone is able to vanquish this hydra, will carry a horror with it. And thus is he deprived of a certain relief, and must be content to put up with a mere palliative cure.

Thus do a great number of afflicted persons languish out a tedious length between diseases and remedies, and become incurable in the end.

Experience authorises such a manner of reasoning, and at the same time shews that mercury being, beyond all contradiction, a specific remedy in the cure of the pox, it must likewise remove all other complaints that depend upon the same cause; and if the cause of such complaints is capable of being destroyed, it is this alone that has power sufficient to do it. A great number of remedies may restrain and palliate the symptoms, and procure a truce, but nothing but mercury will eradicate the principle from which they arise.

What is surprising in the crude mercury, which I give by the mouth, is, that the gentleness with which it acts, seems inconsistent with the prodigious, salutary, and speedy effects which it produces; and that without the least unlucky accident, as I can sincerely aver, from above three and forty years use of it. The like cannot be affirmed of any other medicine.

The more the patient takes of it, the more will he find himself to advance in strength, and a good plight of body.

The thing will appear very possible, upon an unprejudiced consideration, that the mercury, as I have before shewn, insinuates itself very speedily into the liquors, and renders the blood more soft, more fluid, and more fit to be carried and conveyed into the



finest vessels, at ever so great a distance, by the way of circulation, in order to communicate nourishment to the several parts of the body; that it destroys without dispute, all obstructions and obstacles; that it opens the tubes, and the depuratory canals; that it facilitates and forwards the menstrual discharge in women; that it removes every thing that might hinder the distribution of the nutritious juice, and the natural course of the spirits and fluids; that it ruins and absorbs the acids which occasion lameness, and are the foundation of a great number of infirmities; and that it brings about the evacuation of every thing that is heterogenous and vicious, without meddling with any thing that is good or necessary.

All these things shew that crude mercury, used in my manner, does no ways weaken, but strengthens and fattens.

These are my notions of the mechanical action of mercury on vicious ferments, of what nature soever they be; that it may be administered without danger in the most considerable and desperate cases, as well as in the most simple. For example: the apoplexy and palsy being produced from a too thick blood, and from vicious humours settling in the brain, the mercury restoring to the blood its native fluidity, and destroying the viscosities, a free circulation of the liquors and spirits must ensue; for by removing the obstructions, the essential cause of these diseases is removed. A cataract is caused by a foreign matter coagulated by degrees between the christaline humour, and the uvea, or by a thickness of the liquors which circulate in the chrystaline, closing up at last the aperture of the pupil.

There is no doubt but this dissolvent would dissipate such a coagulation, if it were applied in time.

A gutta serena is no other than an obstruction in the optic nerve, caused by substance of the same nature; the same remedy would in all likelihood be attended with success.

In short; all parts of the body, sound or unsound, without exception, are equally penetrated by mercury in healthful persons: in them it acts the part of a friend and benefactor; and to diseased persons, it is a restorer, a redeemer, and a corrector of the causes of their complaints.

What renders it extremely agreeable, is, that during its use, the patient enjoys a perfect tranquillity and calm; it acts without occasioning any conflict or disgust.

This should make it seem probable, that it is pleasing and delightful to nature; since by its means she is delivered from that which oppresses her; without suffering any alteration or disorder in her usual functions.

There can be no greater proof than this, that nature is an enemy to violence; of which I have endeavoured to convince all young surgeons in my former work, treating of the cure of wounds. All these conclusions and surprising operations are wrought without force, without violence, and without noise; she subdues every thing



without putting herself in a hurry; she nourishes all things, produces all things, preserves all things, increases all things, without subjecting her actions to our view. The prudent physician should follow her conduct, and imitate her in the cure of diseases.

I have seen such a method of practice pursued, with an infinite deal of satisfaction, by the learned and judicious M. Cicognini, counsellor and first physician to her royal highness. I am beholden to his merit and to truth, for this authentic declaration, having been an eye witness to his treatment of several patients, whom he cured without giving them any medicine, by observing with great judgment the motions of nature as she acted alone of herself, when she was so inclined or able; and lending her his assistance when she stood in need of it. This is performing the part of a physician to the utmost perfection.

This treatise, I am sensible will seem tedious: my subject has carried me beyond what I intended; I think however that there is nothing in it from which some advantage may not be drawn. I have fallen into repetitions through the weakness of my capacity, and the connection of the proofs, reasons, and cases which I have expiated upon; endeavouring to support a fact which I believe to be entirely new, without any manner of assistance from Greek or Latin.

I was sensible enough that I should meet with opposition; either from envy or prejudice, there being persons in the world who are sworn enemies to novelties, and who, to save themselves the fatigue of exercising their wits, are resolved peaceably, blindly, and supinely to tread in the paths of antiquity, right or wrong, to applaud whatever has been handed down of old, and to condemn, without appeal, every thing that is not of that stamp.

How, say they, can a poor practitioner, without learning or education, have the assurance to patronize a remedy which the most famous authors have rejected? The famous Fernelius rejected it because he knew nothing of it: what precipitate rashness was this!

Well, say they, physic and surgery have for several centuries been in possession of a great many excellent remedies: must these be given up a sacrifice to mercury, and that upon the credit of some cures which chance had the greatest share in? Because his former work, wherein he attacks the venerable oracles of antiquity, was suffered to go unpunished, does he imagine that this shall escape without being sifted, censured and exploded? Though the rage of such an outcry may be thought sufficient to demolish both the author and his system, yet it gives me no very terrible apprehensions: I allow that faults deserving enough of censure, and likewise faulty expressions may be picked out of this treatise, which I did not design for a piece of eloquence: besides, the finest pictures have their shadows.

I am, however, in hopes, that the force of truth, and the reflec-



tions which men of reason shall make upon this subject, will be sufficient to justify me, and protect this treatise of mercury, especially since it is the result of above three and forty years' experience; that a little time and a little patience will make it triumph over its enemies; and that this remedy will, some time or other, have the preference beyond almost all the remedies that are in use, for the good and benefit of mankind.

When a man is arrived at seventy years of age, every day of his life may be regarded as critical, and every year as climacterical; it should therefore seem to behove me to keep my preparation and composition of mercury no longer a secret; especially since in my former work I gave the world a kind of promise that I would communicate it one day or other. That day is not yet come: the rigour of the times, and the considerable losses I have sustained in my own country, have been the means of postponing it.

My family may find a comfortable subsistence from it, and it may be as a kind of recompence to them for being deprived of the benefit of my labours for many years together. To them I leave both it, and the completion of my promise, when they shall think it proper; for I would not have the public always to remain without this advantage.\*

Reflection and experience compelled me to fall into the opinion of Magatus, with regard to the cure of wounds: and I believe most people might be brought over to the same sentiments: be it as it will, I shall have performed no little matter, if I have been able to persuade mankind that crude mercury may be administered to great advantage, without danger or fear; that this simple metal, without taste and without smell, may supply the place of a whole heap of disgustful medicines, whose effects are uncertain, and oftentimes useless and pernicious; and that it preserves the body and spirits in health, and prolongs youthful vigour.

Those who may suspect that I have exaggerated upon the matter, in my report of the virtues of mercury, may, if they please, give themselves the trouble of reading the following letters.

They were written by two famous professors of physic: the first was M. Goffe, doctor of physic in the city of Chiare; and the rest by M. Mancheti, doctor of physic, and physician to his Eminence, the Cardinal Pico de la Mirandola; the one sent from Boulogne, and the rest from Rome, giving an account of what this remedy performed upon this learned physician, on his brother, and on other persons to whom he gave it with good success.

“ Chiare, August 12, 1721.

“ I should have done myself the honour, Sir, to answer your obliging letter before now, but that I was first desirous of observing

\* If this recipe has ever been communicated to the world, it is not sufficiently known. But it is evidently not of first rate importance: perhaps none.—Editor.



the effect of the pills, which you sent for M. la Comtesse Busquet; I am ashamed that I have been so dilatory, but I intend, by way of recompence, to give you an account of the happy success that attended your medicine, which we administered according to your instructions.

“ I am to acquaint you then, in the first place, that the lady is perfectly freed from the cruel pains which tormented her for above four months.

“ We have made use of the remedy about fifteen days; she had not taken four doses before her pains entirely left her; she stirs herself freely, and that with the greatest pleasure, as she had been ever since she was first confined to her bed, obliged to lie on her back.

“ After the seventh dose she got out of bed, and she now walks with crutches.

“ The medicine purged her without the least pain, yet she voided a prodigious amazing quantity of water, by the effect of these excellent pills; at which she was so surprised, and so well pleased, that she is for continuing them on, notwithstanding the heat of the season.

“ If you think well of it, I believe it would not be amiss to send her to Aquy, to complete there what your excellent and admirable remedy has so happily begun. Monsieur and Madame le Comtesse, send you a thousand compliments and thanks, and pray you to present their humble duties to her royal highness. For my own part, I am charmed with this great success, and beg you to believe me, &c.”

This letter was faithfully translated from the Italian into French. The lady found she had no need to go to Aquy.

*The translated copy of a letter written by M. Mancheti, Doctor of Physic, &c. to M. Cicognini, Counsellor and first Physician to her Royal Highness.*

“ SIR,

“ If you fancied that the gout obliged me to walk with a stick, you were very much in the right; but I am to inform you that I have felt nothing of it for five and thirty days past; this I attribute to M. Bellosté's excellent pills, which I took to my very great satisfaction.

“ One of my very particular friends had a fistula in ano for six years together. It came of itself, and opened without pain; it was externally about as big as a pea, and discharged itself at the orifice. I gave him the same pills, and in a short time he found himself perfectly cured. On this account I have ordered forty-eight livres for three ounces of it, which I beg you to send me. If it is not here by next Sunday, I must entreat you, Sir, to give yourself the trouble to send it me to Rome. My brother, I thank God, is



pretty well, though he has still some small remains of his palpitation, but not so much as to incommode him. I was of opinion that antipocondriac and chalybeat medicines might be serviceable to him; but, on the contrary, his symptoms were so much aggravated by their use, that he was forced to lay them aside. I suspected a siziness of the fluids, and that he might have some polypus; which made me fancy that M. Belloste's pills would be the only remedy for him. I prevailed upon him to take them, though the season was pretty cold, and he continued so to do until all his dangerous symptoms left him: his belly is now reduced to its natural size, and his complexion is very good. I wrote to M. Belloste, whom I entreat you to salute in my name.

“ I am, Sir, &c.

“ MANCHETI.”

*A letter sent me by M. Mancheti, of the 9th of October, 1723.*

“ The very worthy and celebrated M. Cicognini has given me, Sir, such assurance of your goodness, that I presume to offer you these lines in testimony of the obligations and thanks which both my brother and myself owe you, although we have not the honour to be known to you: we have experienced each of us, an equal effect and benefit from your wonderful and most excellent pills; the price and value of which cannot be confined to a *Louis d'Or* a grain, if we regard their qualities. Yet I should be glad, Sir, if, for the benefit of mankind, you could a little moderate the price of them. I have wrote to M. Cicognini, who will take care of the quantity you shall think fit to send me; and I entreat you to send directions along with them, and to let me know in what diseases they may be given, and how long they will keep. We shall set out the end of this month for Rome with his Eminence: I shall always be sure to retain a due value and esteem for you, and a readiness to serve you: at present I entreat you to believe me, &c.

“ MANCHETI ”

*An extract from another letter of the same M. Mancheti, of the 14th of January, 1724, from Rome, to his good friend M. Cicognini.*

“ I must acquaint you, dear Sir, that some days since I felt a fresh attack of the gout; my legs being somewhat stiff, and my feet in pain, which was more than I had felt for four months before. I took forthwith a double dose of M. Belloste's pills, which is a whole drachm; and to my great surprise, the operation of the medicine was not over, before all my symptoms were gone. I cannot give too great a character, either of the remedy, or its author, whom I beg you to salute in my name: I should be heartily glad, could I be of any service to him here; not having power to express the great obligations I owe him, &c.”



The encomiums which M. Mancheti gives of this remedy, cannot be suspected. He is a very skilful and judicious physician, and could not be silent about the good effects which this mercury wrought on his brother, who by means of it was entirely freed from a dangerous disease, as likewise upon himself, who in another letter, of February 24, seems to flatter himself that he shall no more be troubled with the gout, which afflicted him so much before, and kept him confined to his chamber for months together; adding, that since he began to make use of my medicine, he has had only one small fit, which lasted him but one day; and that he should be glad to know if this remedy may be employed in a large, hard, and inveterate scirrhus tumour.

I returned him answer forthwith, that he might boldly venture upon the use of it, not only in this, but in all other tumours; that within a month past, I had under my care a gentleman of distinction, well known to M. Cicognini, who had a very bad sarcocoele, accompanied with a hardness of the whole tongue, yet both these complaints were cured with great expedition, without any other remedy: that M. Bouillon, professor-royal in our university, had sent him to me; and that the same very learned physician had long since made trial of it in other very difficult cases, to his entire satisfaction.

Having had no opportunity of saying any thing about a polypus in this treatise; and these letters from Rome having been sent after I had finished it, I thought it would not be amiss to subjoin something concerning the cure of Dr. Mancheti's brother; because I think I have luckily fallen upon something which I may call a new discovery.

The polypus is an excrescence of flesh, which takes its name from its figure; resembling a fish that is so called. It is engendered from an acrid, tenacious, viscous blood, which circulates very slowly; this gives occasion to the acrid and acid humours to excoriate the orifices of certain vessels, and at the same time, to thicken the nutritious juice which flows from the sustenance of the parts, and mixing with the other viscous liquors, forms excrescences, which take root where the excoriations began, and which take the figure of the places or cavities in which they are formed:—in the heart, the vessels, and the nose, they are long, rounded, or flat; and in the scrotum they constitute a round mass which is called sarcocoele. Thus these maladies, though they go under different names, are all of one and the same nature.

Experience having convinced me, on a multitude of occasions, that my mercury cures these sarcocoeles, the same remedy must likewise cure the polypus, wheresoever it be.

It is not difficult to conceive how this should be: it destroys the acid and acrid humours, and renders them fluid: their thickness is the efficient cause of these diseases; and the cause being removed the symptoms cease.



It liquifies and resolves all unnatural unions; by the former of which properties it hinders the progress of a disease, which might otherwise increase, and occasion the person's death; and by the latter it destroys the tumour, and acts upon the excrescence, as it does on scirrhus, glandular tumours, and obstructions.

Finally, to put an end to this treatise, which is already too long, though I find it is difficult to finish it on the account of the new proofs which continually offer, I will add this short reflection, without abusing my reader's patience any longer.

Every one is sensible that all countries abound with a great number of people of no service to the community, who are kept at a considerable expence in hospitals, on account of several real and pretended infirmities, which their manner of living, either in laziness, or in fatigue and misery has brought upon them, who pass for incurables, and are really so at last, for want of using the only remedy which is capable of curing them speedily, and with small expence.

Crude mercury taken at the mouth would clear the hospitals of them all, and re-establish numbers of slothful vagabonds in a condition to work; who, under a pretext of certain maladies, which they industriously cherish and prolong till they become contagious, infect whole cities and countries, and extort alms, which they apply to evil uses.

NOTE.—Since I sent the foregoing Treatise to the Printer, I resolved, as there is a clamour about this Crude Mercury, or Quick-silver, being a poison, to poison myself first, by way of fair play. I sent first for an ounce, then for four ounces; and now, for ten days, I have swallowed, each day, a little globule, about the size of an ordinary or rather large pill. I have found its action upon my body precisely what I expected, from the confidence I had placed in the statement of Belloste: and I now vouch for the accuracy of that statement, as to the general qualities of Crude Mercury. Swallow it as a metal, in its pure state: any mixture is likely to corrupt it. As far as I was in need of benefit, I have found it, and feel its virtues throughout my frame. I have been for five years subject to rheumatic attacks, particularly the sciatica, and had, consequently, taken to wear flannel next the skin; but, in consequence of the power and virtues of Mercury to dispel this disease, I have thrown off my flannels, and feel, at this moment, in



the most perfect state of health, free from pain and blemish, quite a young man again.

I earnestly recommend it to every person who has any kind of complaints. To exterminate and prevent disease is one of the first duties of mankind for the benefit of all, and I have long resolved so far to study physic, when at liberty, as to war with all the quackery that exists among the medical craft. I crave liberty more for the purpose of gaining experimental science, than for any other object.

TO WAR WITH PREJUDICE IS MY DELIGHT. I respect it nowhere, in no person, nor for any purpose; so, in future, I shall war with all prejudices against the use of Crude Mercury, **ALL HEALTHFUL MERCURY!** But mind, that Crude Mercury, or Quicksilver, is a balsam; but when sublimed with fire or acids, or any way killed, it is mercury destroyed, poisoned; not prepared and improved.

**RICHARD CARLILE.**











